

Item 55: Road Construction and Reconstruction

Purpose: This monitoring item was established to examine the miles and costs of Forest Development Road construction and reconstruction. This item was originally developed to evaluate the rate of development of road access on forest land.

Methods: The forest maintains database information about individual roads which can be queried to produce road construction and reconstruction totals based on final inspection reports at completion of project work.

Results: Database totals indicate that the miles of new road construction were trending slowly downward thru 1994, and have been at a very low level since 1995. New construction road mileage from this monitoring period of 2001 through 2008 have only totaled 4.4 miles

Road reconstruction mileage reported has varried widely over the monitoring period. This is primarily a result of road improvements in landscape treatments. Table 53-2 has a separate row to display these results. By definition, reconstruction is an activity which changes the standard of a road. Changing a road from a single lane to a double lane or increasing the design speed would be reconstruction activities. Improving the drainage but leaving the the traffic flow characteristics the same would be considered a maintenance activity. Reported mileage totals over time have not always followed these definitions precisely. Much of the work reported over time as reconstruction has actually been maintenance work, and in many cases maintenance work which had been deferred from previous years. It is very likely that many of these miles in 53-2 have been reported this way.

Road reclamation (decommissioning) projects have also taken place during the period from 2001-2008. Road decommissioning has been tracked thru four steps; decision, contract award, contract completion, and removal of roads from the system once objectives have been met. Appropriate funding and veg management plans that helped identify roads for decommissioning have helped stabilize this plan, offering a fairly consistant decommissioning program. This is displayed well in Table 53-2, item 53.

Evaluation: The amount of new road construction will probably continue to be low. Reconstruction of existing roads should also be expected to occur at low levels. Maintenance projects, especially those focused on environmental improvements or safety concerns will probably increase. Reclamation of unneeded roads should be expected to continue in pursuit of the Amendment 19 Bear Management Unit standards.